(f) what efforts are being made by Government to step up meaningful use of AIR/Doordarshan to combat AIDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI D. K. THARA DEVI SIDDHARTHA): (a) Yes.

(b) The Government has taken adequate steps to define the prevelence of HIV infaction in this country by putting into place an elaborate surveillance system. This surveillance sytem includes clinical, serological and sentinal surveillance. The Government of India has also taken steps to provide testing facilities for screening blood on a Zonal basis and for modernisation of blood banks.

(c) and (d) Yes.

(e) and (f) T..V. is being utilised to provide information about AIDS. Coordination is maintained and educational material are supplied from time to time to AIR and Doordarshan for mounting educational programmes on AIDS to educate the public.

Oil exploration by foreign oil companies

51. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many foreign oil companies have expressed their interest in oil exploration in India;

(b) whether the Minister had held any discussions with them during his recent visit abroad; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER of PETROLEUM AND NATUARL GAS (SHRI B SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministe discussions with several foreign oi companies who showed keen interes in participating in the Fourth Roun of biding.

Domestic gas connections

52. SHRI MENTAY PADAMANABHAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government propos to take to meet the approximate backlog of 70 lakh applications fo domestic gas connections;

(b) what is the State-wise breal up of this backlog;

(c) what is the existing system fo determining the annual State-wise allocation of new gas connections and

(d) what are the infrastructura facilities being developed presently to meet the huge demand?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B SHANKARANAND): (a) and (d) Additional LPG connections will be given from time to time depending upon the availability of LPG in the country.

(b) A statement is annexed. (*See* below)

(c) Allocation of new LPG gas connections is not being done State wise. In allocating the new LPG gas connections, some preference is given to distributors who have not reached the viability levels.